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**18<sup>th</sup> Annual MA Public Fire & Life Safety Public Education Conference**  
***Topsfield Capt. Jenifer Collins-Brown 2012 Fire & Life Safety Educator of the Year***  
***Fall River Lt. Michael Arruda Receives Lifetime Achievement in Fire Education Award***

The Department of Fire Services hosted the *18th annual Public Fire and Life Safety Education Conference* on September 27-28, 2012. Classroom teachers, nurses, firefighters, school resource officers and injury prevention experts gathered at the Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center for two days of training and skill development in 30 workshops and four general sessions presented by 52 speakers. There were basic offerings for newcomers to the field, new workshops to challenge experienced educators, and workshops to improve the ability to collaborate with other community partners and to expand program management skills.

**Princella Lee Bridges, Burn Survivor, Sprinkler Advocate, Speaker**

Princella Lee Bridges, a burn survivor who is one of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA), National Fire Sprinkler Initiative's Faces of Fire, spoke on how residential sprinklers would have changed her life. She has channeled her personal struggles and losses into Bridges from Augusta Inc., a nonprofit organization she founded to help individuals and families who have suffered burn injuries and trauma as they transition back into the community. She is a powerful advocate for home fire sprinklers.

**2012 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year Award**

The 2012 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year Award was presented on September 28 to Topsfield Fire Captain Jenifer Collins-Brown. She received the award for her dedication to a wide range of fire and injury prevention programs in her community, her leadership and mentoring of firefighters in her own department and all across Essex County. The other outstanding nominees were: Boston Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Fleming; Brockton Fire Lt. Robert Hendrigan; Springfield Fire Capt. Michael Richard; and Westport Fire Lt. Brian Beaulieu.

*Administrative Services • Division of Fire Safety*  
*Hazardous Materials Response • Massachusetts Firefighting Academy*

**About the Winner: Topsfield Fire Captain Jenifer Collins-Brown, Topsfield Fire**

Captain Jenifer Collins-Brown has taken fire and life safety to a level beyond normal expectations. Whether it is in a classroom presentation at an elementary school or the Fire Department Explorer Post or the Council for the Aging, she integrates fire and life safety education into each interaction she has and her enthusiasm is contagious. Captain Collins-Brown runs a prevention program within the schools that has shown success with two recent “Young Heroes.” Two 12-year old babysitters took appropriate action when they smelled smoke. Jenifer’s commitment to safety education also includes bicycle safety programs and fire and safety instruction to the elderly. With the elderly, she goes out of her way to do routine safety lectures and home visits, which include smoke and carbon dioxide detector testing and suggestions on fall prevention. Captain Collins-Brown mentors all thirty members of the Topsfield Fire Department on a day-to-day basis and has persuaded all of them assist in her educational programs. Through her leadership, area fire departments staff a booth at the Topsfield Fair each year providing fire safety education to thousands of fair-goers. She is proactive, preventive and compassionate.

**Fall River Fire Insp. Michael Arruda Received Life Achievement in Public Education**

Fall River Inspector Michael Arruda, received a Lifetime Achievement in Public Education Award on his very last day of work. Inspector Arruda has spent a career creating a comprehensive fire and life safety education program in his community in addition to his full-time responsibilities as fire inspector for the large city of Fall River. His commitment to fire education began long before there was any state funding for fire education through the S.A.F.E. Program. Receiving very little financial or personnel support from the fire department, he has creatively leveraged community resources to fund fire education. Michael has created a network of connections in Fall River and after 26 years, he knows every single school principal by name. He has harnessed the media to get his messages out through radio and television public service announcements and he writes a widely-read newspaper column. The long-term impact of his efforts is demonstrated by a reduction in the numbers of fires. He is one-man, full-service, public education program. When Michael retires shortly, he will leave a lasting legacy of prevention through education for his successors to follow.

**About the Award**

This award honors an individual or a team for their involvement and commitment to make our world safer from fire and other preventable injuries. It seeks to recognize those who have exhibited excellence in educating their community members about fire and life safety, and have demonstrated outstanding leadership, teamwork, creativity and perseverance. Nominees may be of any profession.

## About the Nominees

### **Deputy Joseph M. Fleming**

#### **Boston Fire Department**

Deputy Chief Fleming is nominated for a decade of leadership and advocacy for photoelectric smoke alarms. His public education efforts have been largely as a private citizen, and not as a member of the Boston Fire Department. His efforts have not been in the traditional role of delivering education directly to citizens but on a broader level, impacting policies that affect the safety of thousands. Fleming has been a tireless advocate for smoke alarms and is responsible for many important changes to the Massachusetts Building and Fire Codes that have saved lives.

### **Lieutenant Robert Hendrigan**

#### **Brockton Fire Department**

In the past 16 months, Lieutenant Robert Hendrigan has reinvigorated the Brockton Fire Department's S.A.F.E. Program reaching the kindergarten, first and third grades in Brockton's many public and private schools. He has successfully implemented the S.A.F.E. third grade evaluation tool in Brockton. He has also established a protocol within the department to get feedback on youngsters who respond appropriately to fires and other emergencies so that "young heroes" will be spotted quickly. Recently, Hendrigan provided extinguisher training to school employees and one week later, an employee put out a fire with one. Stealing an idea from last year's conference, Hendrigan analyzed the fire problem in Brockton and found they had a serious cooking fire problem in certain public housing high-rise buildings. His proposal to provide education to the tenants as well as to work with the housing authority to install burner safety covers has just been funded by the National Fire Protection Association's Rolf H. Jensen Award. Hendrigan also received the Firemark Award from Liberty Mutual for getting a large number of people to complete on-line fire safety questionnaires, driving them to get fire safety information.

### **Captain Michael Richard**

#### **Springfield Fire Department**

Captain Michael Richard is an accomplished coalition builder and is one of the most enthusiastic fire educators you will ever meet. Springfield was a large city in receivership for many years so there was not a lot of support available for fire education but he was undeterred. He formed the Western MA Fire Educators Association that provides support for local fire and life safety events. This coalition of educators is always there for each other, enabling them to do more with what little they have. Last year this energetic group took on a huge challenge and staffed a fire education booth for the full 17 days of the "Big E", an agricultural fair in West Springfield. The Big E is currently running until September 30th, and you are welcome to visit their booth this year in the Massachusetts Building and lend a hand if you like. Recently promoted, Captain Richard recruited three people to succeed him who reflect the diversity of the people of Springfield, and he has seen to it that they are trained and enthusiastic about fire education. Last year, Springfield had young hero when a 7-year old boy helped save his entire family from a fire by having them make a home escape plan in advance, and then helping them use it during the fire. Captain

Richard builds and sustains strategic partnerships with schools, municipal agencies, community groups, and individuals and is constantly working to build trust in the community so his safety messages can be heard.

**Lieutenant Brian A. Beaulieu**

**Westport Fire Department**

In seven years Lieutenant Beaulieu has transformed Westport's S.A.F.E. Program into an interactive collaboration with school staff, students, parents and firefighters. He works hard to establish credibility internally in the fire department and with colleagues in the school department. His mentorship of fellow fire educators has developed a solid core of fire educators in the department. Lt. Beaulieu constantly improves his lesson plans so they are interactive and engaging to students. He especially reaches out to parents who report that their children eagerly "demand" that the family practice a home fire drill and establish a meeting place. Recently Westport had its first young hero, when a student reacted appropriately to a fire during a sleep over in another community. Since 1988, Brian has worked closely with the police department and students and staff at the high school to run a safe prom event for juniors and seniors. He also reaches out to older adults in Westport. He is an instructor with the MA Firefighting Academy and teaches the Public Fire and Life Safety Educator class. As a member of the MA Public Fire and Life Safety Education Task Force he was instrumental in pilot-testing the new S.A.F.E. evaluation tools.